



## **DeLay denies misuse of agency**

He has no second thoughts about calling FAA to search for lawmakers

*By Suzanne Gamboa*  
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House Majority Leader Tom DeLay on Tuesday defended his office's inquiry through the Federal Aviation Administration into the whereabouts of a Texas legislator's plane in a state political dispute.

DeLay said the agency used the Internet to answer his questions, but investigators said some of the information given to DeLay, the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Homeland Security Department came from FAA databases that are not publicly accessible.

DeLay, in a briefing with reporters, said he has no second thoughts about his office's decision to call the FAA May 12 to locate the plane of Rep. Pete Laney.

Laney used his plane to join other state Democrats in Ardmore, Okla., where they stayed four days to prevent a vote in the Texas Legislature on a GOP-favored redistricting bill.

"The IG report went and pointed out exactly what we did. We asked for publicly available information. In fact, I think the report pointed out that in order to answer our questions, they went to the Internet to get the answers quicker than they could going through their own processes," DeLay said.

Investigators said some of the information DeLay sought could be obtained through the commercial Internet sites, some that require nominal fees.

But they also said that other information came from the FAA databases, which are not available through the Internet.

"Some of it may very well be available on the Internet but I didn't hear that Mr. DeLay had a subscription to those services," said Rep. Jim Turner of Texas, ranking Democrat on the House committee that has responsibility for overseeing the Department of Homeland Security.

DeLay's comments preceded a House hearing Tuesday that focused on a Department of Transportation investigation into the eight-hour search for the Laney's plane.

An investigative report was released Friday.

House Transportation Committee Chairman Rep. Don Young, R- Alaska, said DeLay's inquiry with the FAA is "what I call constituent services."

The investigation also concluded that at least 13 FAA employees helped look for the plane and FAA offices in Washington, Texas and Oklahoma assisted.

The report also found that some FAA controllers knew the plane was linked to the political dispute ongoing in Texas at the time.

Democrats disagreed with DeLay's interpretation of the inspector general's report.

"I don't see how anybody can read that report and come back that there was not a misuse of resources. Mr. DeLay made all the contacts to the FAA and found out where Pete Laney was located," said Rep. Gene Green, D-Texas.

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